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ABSTRACT

This paper lists the questions distributed to parents of children in this bilingual program in order to determine their perception of needs, and summarizes the responses of the few who returned the questionnaire. It is concluded that the weakest area of the program is parent involvement. Several suggestions are made for increasing the participation of parents in the educational process of their children. (EB)

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Programmatic Needs and Satisfaction of Hispanic Parents to the Buffalo, New York Title I Bilingual Program 1977-1978

by

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In order to determine the perception of the parents in the Bilingual program toward programmatic needs and programmatic satisfaction, a questionnaire was distributed. The return was extremely small, and consequently, it is not suggested that these reflect the perception of the parents in general. The responses are, however, useful in determining trends and certainly in terms of reporting how a small group of parents feel about the program. Following are the questions and the responses.

1. How long has your child been in a Title I Reading or Math Program?

   The average length of time that parents reported was 1.7 years. The highest number of responses, however, was one year, with eighteen people responding one year, six responding three years, six responding two years, one responding four years, and one responding five years.

2. Do you have other children in the Title I program?

   The responses to this question were somewhat equally distributed. Forty-four parents said they had other children in the program and thirty-six parents said they had no other children in the program. This question could have provided more information if the parents who responded "no" had also been asked whether or not they had ever had other children in the program.

3. How satisfied are you with the program?

Most of the parents were satisfied with the program. Forty-six said they were very satisfied, twenty-five said they were satisfied, and only five said they were not satisfied. Of those parents who said they were not satisfied, two responded they didn't know what the program was.

4. Are you satisfied with the progress your child is making?

In general, those parents who were satisfied with the program were also satisfied with the progress their children were making. Specifically, forty-three parents said they were very satisfied, twenty-two said they were satisfied, and only nine said they were not satisfied. Of those who were dissatisfied, two said they did not get any report of their children's progress.

5. Does your child seem to like the program?

Most of the parents overwhelmingly feel that their children like the program. To this question, seventy parents responded "yes," and only six parents responded "no."

6. Are you adequately informed of your child's program?

The responses to this question were about evenly divided. Thirty-six parents responded that most of the time they were adequately informed about the program;

thirty-three parents said they were informed some of the time, and eight parents said they were hardly ever informed of their child's program. It should be noted that a large number of parents did not respond to this question. This lack of response indicates that a much larger number than the eight who said they were hardly ever informed probably fit into this category.

7. Are you informed of the activities taking place in the Title I classroom?

   Fifty-two parents said they were informed of the activities, however, twenty-two parents said they were not informed. This question could be improved to elicit better information. The question is not specific enough.

8. Has the teacher encouraged you to participate in the school program?

   Thirty-one parents said the teacher did encourage them to participate in the school program. Fifty parents said the teacher did not encourage their participation. This area, as can be seen from the responses to the following question, is an extremely weak part of the program.

9. What specific things has the teacher done to encourage you to participate in the school program?

   Not one parent of the total number of respondents was

able to list one activity the teacher did to encourage their participation.

10a. Are you a member of the Parent Advisory Committee?
Six parents responded "yes" to this question; sixty parents responded "no."

10b. Are you a member of the PTA?
Fifteen parents responded "yes" to this question and fifty-eight responded "no."

11. Do these organizations seem to be helpful to you?
Opinion seems to vary a great deal on the helpfulness of these organizations. The question may perhaps be a little ambiguous. I am not quite sure how "helpful to you" was interpreted by the parents. If this question is to be asked another time, I would recommend that the words "to you" be omitted and "helpful in what specific ways" be elicited.

Of the persons responding, sixteen felt that the organizations were very helpful, eleven felt they were somewhat helpful, fourteen felt they were a little helpful, and twenty felt they were not at all helpful.

The responses to this question also help to explain the lack of involvement in the PAC and PTA.

12. What do you like most about the program?

Most parents said what they liked most was the fact that the program helped their children. No answers were more specific than that. One parent said he/she did not know about the program, and another said he/she did not like anything about the program. Most of the parents, however, recognized that the program was a help to their children and for this reason liked the program.

13. What do you dislike most about the program?

Most of the parents did not respond to this question. Of the three responding, two mentioned that they wanted their children taught Spanish and the other simply said that he/she did not know about the program.

14. Do you feel that the Bilingual program should maintain Spanish and teach English, or only teach English?

The parents overwhelmingly felt that the program should maintain the Spanish language and teach English. This response was indicated by sixty-seven parents, while only fifteen parents felt the students should only be taught English.

Conclusions

The weakest area of the program is parental involvement and input. Even though many parents expressed satisfaction with the program and with the progress of their children, and felt that they knew what was taking place in the program, not one person could name any specific thing which the teacher had done to encourage them to participate in the educational process of their children. I suspect most of them do not know what is going on in the program or how well their child is progressing, but because they have not received complaints from either the child or the child's teacher, they feel that the child likes the program and is progressing.

I think that teachers should be required to list the types of activities they have asked the parents to participate in and additionally, they should provide some type of formal progress report so that the parents could be better informed of the nature of the program and the academic progress of their children.

Related to this is the parental perception of the PTA's and the Parental Advisory Committee's lack of direct usefulness to them. Some effort must be made to include these parents in the educational process of their children. These organizations are the natural vehicle for this end, however, until a more aggressive campaign for parent involvement is made, these parents will remain on the fringes.

Lastly, parents overwhelmingly want some form of a Spanish maintenance program. Parents are very concerned that their children learn to function and compete in the English language without neglecting their own culture and their own language.

Summary Table of Responses

Item	Response		
	Yes	No	N
2. Do you have other children in the program?	44	36	80
5. Does your child seem to like the program?	70	06	76
7. Are you informed of the activities taking place in the Title I classroom?	54	22	76
8. Has the teacher encouraged you to participate in the school program?	31	50	81
10a. Are you a member of the Parent Advisory Committee?	06	60	66
10b. Are you a member of the PTA?	15	58	63
14a. Do you feel the program should maintain Spanish and teach English?	67	24	91
14b. Do you feel the program should teach only English?	15	11	06

Item	Response			
	Very Satis.	Satis-fied	Not Satis.	N
3. How satisfied are you with the progra.?	46	25	05	76
4. Are you satisfied with the progress your child is making?	43	22	09	74

Item	Response			
	Most of the Time	Some of the Time	Hardly Ever	N
6. Are you adequately informed of your child's program?	36	33	08	67

Item	Response				
	Very Much	Some-what	A Little	Not at All	N
11. Do these organizations seem to be helpful to you?	16	11	14	20	61